

Parents Are Hard To Raise® S01 Episode 109 Transcript

[00:00:00] The world's becoming a dangerous place for us women. Lipstick bodyguard looks just like an innocent little lipstick, but it will instantly drop any attacker to his knees, so you can get away unharmed. Lipstick bodyguard, fear no evil. Get yours today, only at lipstickbodyguard.com.

Announcer [00:00:52] Caring for one parent with health challenges is hard enough... Caring For two at the same time? That's Double Trouble. This week on Parents Are Hard To Raise® it's all about you and your questions as Diane catches up with listener emails. Join 180 million monthly subscribers who can now listen to Parents Are Hard To Raise® on Spotify.

Diane Berardi [00:01:10] Welcome to Parents Are Hard To Raise®... Helping families grow older together without losing their minds. I'm elder care expert, Diane Berardi.

[00:01:21] We have so many listeners from around the world and I want to thank you for listening and for sending in your e-mails.

[00:01:30] We get so many e-mails every day and I promise to get and answer all of them. It just sometimes takes me a little while, so it may not be as timely as it should be, but I promise to get to them.

[00:01:44] A lot of the e-mails that come in and the questions are about similar topics. So I wanted to remind our listeners and to let our new listeners know that there is a whole archive of shows. We have had so many wonderful guest experts on talking about different topics.

[00:02:08] And I know for instance Adeline, in Quebec City, she had wanted to know about getting a dog for her mom. And first of all Adeline, I love Quebec City. I attended the music festival there. Maybe two years, three years and the last time I was there was for your four hundredth anniversary special. It's a great, wonderful city and everyone was just so friendly and welcoming.

[00:02:37] But anyway back to that... She wanted to know about getting a dog for her mom and we had episode 68 dog trainer Frank Puglisi on and the service dog Bella. So you have to listen to that show. And he talked about different personality traits in dogs that would be great for your elderly parents. And Bella also had an input in that show. So you need to listen to it. And episode ninety five, Dr. Angela Carl she talked about the benefits of dog ownership for Our Aging Parents.

[00:03:15] And just the other day Cero from Granada, Spain, another place I visited, but that was way back in high school. But again, a wonderful place to visit. Cero wrote about UTI's- urinary tract infections. And that's a big problem and a very common problem in the elderly.

[00:03:36] And episode 56 I had talked about chronic urinary tract infections. And episode 75, Dr. Felice Gersh, our Parents Are Hard To Raise® resident physician she had talked about, urinary tract infections, can they lead to death and dementia?

[00:03:57] Fran from Aurora, Illinois was interested in any help for caregivers that are caring for their parent with dementia. And oh my gosh, we have so many listeners whose

parents have Alzheimer's dementia or vascular dementia. So episode 46 I had given some tips on how to help U.S. caregivers manage the stress of dementia. Episode 58 Dan Cohen from Music and Memory. He did a wonderful show. That's a great show to listen to. Episode 69 Molly Wisniewski had talked about activities for dementia patients, things you can do with your parents. Episode 67 Anthony Colandro, a security expert, he had talked about dementia and guns. And actually I was just reading an article about a home health aide who went into a patient's home just this week and the gentleman was sitting there with a gun. So what she did. So Anthony Colandro had talked about it. And just to let you know what this home health aide did was, she said to him, Oh I forgot something in the car. And she went out and she called the police. And the police came in. As it happened they took the gentleman to the hospital. He was suffering from confusion. That's the story, that's as far as the story goes that I know about. But that was another great episode. And episode 82 Doctor Kat Toups. She had talked about natural healing for dementia and talked about her personal story with dementia, and also about reversing dementia. So those are were really wonderful shows.

[00:05:44] On a different note. If you're thinking about Mom and Dad joining a senior center... Episode 84. We were live in Howell, New Jersey. At the Howell, New Jersey Senior Center. And you need to listen to that to see what a great senior center should be. And you'll listen to a lot of the participants in the center and them talk about how they love the place, how they came to go there, and how they felt initially and how they felt being there after a period of time and it's like one big family. And also the people who work there in the different areas. So that's a great show to listen to if you're thinking about mom and dad going to a senior center.

[00:06:31] And another different area. We had in episode 79, Brenda Bacon, CEO of Brandywine living. And she was talking about options for Mom and Dad. If you're thinking about different options. And we will be having her come back very shortly on another episode to talk about what's new in options for senior living. And I had talked about, I had just popped in to one of her Brandywine residences. And phenomenal reception that I got. And I just came in off the street and people were very nice. The place ran wonderfully. It was clean. The people were happy. Everybody was engaged.

[00:07:15] So those are just some of the episodes. And we have... I think well, I'm on Episode 109 today to move on to that. So you can imagine you can go back and there you go. There you have it. Thank you again for all your e-mails.

[00:07:30] I chose one e-mail today from Linda from Iowa that I want to talk about. Thank you so much Linda for your email.

[00:07:38] And Linda covers a bunch of topics in one email. And she writes, "Thank you for your radio show. I get a lot of valuable information from you. My husband and I are blessed with four healthy but aging parents." That's wonderful Linda. "The topic I would like to hear about, is when both parents are struggling with memory loss but yet think they are the primary caregiver in the situation, or perhaps the issue of dealing with multiple parents experiencing a variety of health issues simultaneously. Not really caregiver stress but the struggle of juggling multiple care issues."

[00:08:14] Well that's a big loaded email, because there's so many issues in there and so many topics.

[00:08:21] I'm going to talk about, today, the problem of caring for different parents with different issues. Because there's so many of us dealing with that right now.

[00:08:35] Caring for one parent is hard. You're juggling your life and their care and their life so that becomes really tough. Two parents with different health issues at the same time very overwhelming. You're pulled in so many different directions. But the reason I chose this topic today too is because there are so many people, I think I probably talked to four different friends this week and they are dealing with the same thing-- two different parents at the same time. And I myself now are dealing with two different parents with two different issues.

[00:09:14] So it's more and more common today. I was telling my father that, because he's saying to me, Oh my gosh 88, that was it. 88 to 90, I just went way downhill.

[00:09:25] And I say to him, Dad you're 90 and you know we're all living longer, and you have more and more chronic conditions. So that's what's happening so...

[00:09:39] Yeah. But I did good up to 88.

[00:09:40] I said, And that's great! You're lucky that you did.

[00:09:43] So this is what's happening. So I have my mom and dad with two totally different issues.

[00:09:50] And what happens with our parents, with the elderly is... Their individual needs are the most important thing in their world, in their mind, at that time.

[00:10:04] So you know at that moment it's, This is what I need.

[00:10:08] So it's kind of hard. And even though they know their spouse might something, too, they kind of get selfish a little bit without even realizing it because they're scared. You know, and their need is the most important.

[00:10:22] There was a study years ago from Northwestern Mutual. And I think they said that 60 percent of Americans felt that taking care of two parents between the ages of 85 to 90 was harder than handling two toddlers between the ages of 3 and 5 years old.

[00:10:43] So... And we probably can relate to that. So anyone taking care of two different parents.

[00:10:50] So when we become a caregiver for a parent, it either happens suddenly or it slowly sneaks up on us. But I think either way it happens, we go into this crisis mode. I know that's what happened to me. And it started with my mom.

[00:11:08] My parents were... It was fine. You know everybody was going along, you know. And in the back of your mind, you know, well that's not going to be forever. But they're going smooth, so you don't, you kind of don't worry about anything. You're like, OK I can breathe.

[00:11:24] And then something happens, and we shift all our priorities. We go into this crisis mode and we want to make sure that everything is taken care of.

[00:11:33] And you kind of don't think about how long you're going to be doing this. You just, you drop everything and you you reorganize and you just try to fit everything in, and you try to keep your life going and pleasing everybody in your life and still taking care of your parents. And you don't think about how long it's going to be. You just in the back of your mind. I. I think we just assume or think wow we're gonna help them out and then life's gonna go back to normal.

[00:12:05] But it doesn't always happen that way. A lot of times it doesn't happen that way. You know, we can start out maybe with simple shopping or paying bills and you can wind up as a full time caregiver and caring for their every need. You know it depends what's happening.

[00:12:22] And you know, it could be days, it could be months. It could be years. So your whole life can be shifted and that's you know with one one parent.

[00:12:33] When you have multiple and your pulled in so many different directions, It's chaotic. It's draining. So what do you do?

[00:12:42] Well, I think the first thing you have to figure out is... So what does each parent need? Do they need anything together? Are there things that you can help together?

[00:12:54] So what my mom needed is she needed to be encouraged to eat, someone to help her to eat. Someone to make meals for her. To take her to the doctors. To take her for chemo.

[00:13:09] And my dad was doing okay at that time, but he really couldn't take her to all the doctors or to chemo. But he was there to make meals, to do the laundry. To be there for her, if she needed anything. And then in caring for her, bam. He fell.

[00:13:29] So now what does he need? He needs to go to the doctor and now we need to help him.

[00:13:38] He could move, but very slowly. And what happens to the food, the shopping, the laundry? You know the things that he was doing for her. So we have to fill in in that area.

[00:13:50] Then we have to think about, what can we do, but what are we also comfortable doing? You know there might be things we can do, but what are we comfortable doing as well? And what's realistic? And logistically, what can we do?

[00:14:07] You know, if you are a long distance caregiver, you live in another state, you can't be coming home every week to shop. But maybe you can do the shopping online, or you can set it up for your mom to do, or you can organize someone to do it.

[00:14:25] So we have to not only look at ourselves, and then we have to think about our spouse. Can our spouse help? Can our kids help?

[00:14:33] A lot of people, even if they're grown kids, they don't think about you're your mom and dad's grandkids. They don't think about them helping out. And they want to help, but they might not know what they can do.

[00:14:47] What about your siblings? That's a big issue. That's a touchy issue, because what happens in many families... One sibling gets stuck and that creates a whole nother show.

[00:15:04] In a minute, I want to talk to you more about siblings, what's in the news and what I did when I walked into a home and saw a woman painting her nails with lipstick.

[00:15:16] But first if you are a woman or there's a woman in your life there's something you absolutely need to know.

[00:15:23] I want to tell you about my friend Katie. Katie is a nurse and she was attacked on her way home from work. She was totally taken by surprise. And although Katie is only 5 feet tall and 106 pounds she was easily able to drop her 6 foot 4, 250-pound attacker to his knees and get away unharmed.

Katie wasn't just lucky that day. She was prepared.

In her pocketbook, a harmless looking lipstick, which really contained a powerful man stopping aerosol propellant.

It's not like it was in our grandmother's day. Today just going to and from work or to the mall can have tragic consequences. The FBI says a violent crime is committed every 15 seconds in the United States. And a forcible rape happens every five minutes. And chances are when something happens, no one will be around to help.

It looks just like a lipstick. So no one will suspect a thing. Which is important since experts say, getting the jump on your attacker is all about the element of surprise.

Inside this innocent looking lipstick is the same powerful stuff used by police and the military to disarm even the most powerful, armed aggressor. In fact, National Park rangers used the very same formula that's inside this little lipstick to stop two-thousand pound vicious grizzly bears dead in their tracks. It's like carrying a personal bodyguard with you in your purse or your pocket.

Darkness brings danger. Murderers and rapists use darkness to their advantage. We all know what it's like to be walking at night and hear footsteps coming at us from behind. Who's there? If it's somebody bad, will you be protected? Your life may depend on it.

My friend Katie's close call needs to be a wake up call for all of us. Myself included. Pick up a Lipstick Bodyguard and keep it with you always.

Announcer [00:17:20] You know you're listening to Parents Are Hard To Raise®. Now, Thanks to you, The number one eldercare talk show on planet Earth.

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[00:17:42] Want a great new way to listen to the show? Have an Amazon Echo or dot? Just say, Alexa play Parents Are Hard To Raise® podcast.

Alexa [00:17:52] Getting the latest episode of Parents Are Hard To Raise®. Here it is from my heart radio.

Announcer [00:17:57] It's as simple as that.

Diane Berardi [00:17:59] You're right Dolly. There are so many really cool new ways to listen to our show. It's hard to keep track. You can join the one hundred and eighty million listeners on Spotify. You can listen in your car, at the gym, or pretty much anywhere on your smartphone with Apple podcasts and Google podcasts. You can get us on Apple TV, Direct TV, Roku. And like Dolly said, you can even ask Alexa to play the show for you. It's great because you don't have to be tied to a radio anymore. You can listen when you want, where you want, for as long as you want. And if you're listening to the show on one of these new ways please do me a big favor. Please share this new technology. Help someone else learn about the show and show them a new way to listen.

[00:18:45] So many of us talk about our siblings. There's you know we get so many e-mails and so many people say you know there's two of us so there's three of us and there's always one sibling who winds up doing everything.

[00:19:00] And it's very interesting because we know this happens and there's even new data from Northwestern Mutual that tells us in the United States only one in 10 families share caregiving responsibilities as a team among siblings. The responsibility usually falls on one sibling rather than being shared.

[00:19:23] So it's not just your family. It's everywhere. And it's just for a variety of reasons. There's people that don't live in the area. Maybe people don't want to do anything. People don't feel like they can do anything. I don't even know.

[00:19:39] But families, you hear this a lot, when siblings come in from long distance... My husband will say, They're like seagulls. They come in, they make a lot of noise, they crap all over everything and then they go. So I don't know that happens to you, but it just kind of creates chaos. And I think that probably every sibling... I can't say every... But most probably want to help and maybe it's hard. And we know it's hard for them if they're not in the area because they can't do you know what you can do. But we have to give decide on jobs for them to do, that they can do like maybe paying bills or ordering food online. Different things like that.

[00:20:25] So you do have to see what your spouse can do, maybe your kids. You know neighbors... Like I know my moms and dads case, neighbors offer all the time. And I myself... You know I don't want to feel like I'm burdening the neighbors all the time.

[00:20:43] So here's a situation where you know we're pulled in two different directions...

[00:20:49] My mom has to go for chemo on Thursdays and my husband takes her. And she likes my husband to take her. And she's very comfortable with that.

[00:20:59] That's the routine. You know they have their own special way to do things. He's a physician so he knows exactly what to do. He knows what she needs and he puts the medicine on her. I mean they have a routine. And she doesn't want... I mean if someone else has to take her, she'll tolerate it. But she really wants him.

[00:21:23] Now of course, my dad has to go to the V.A. for help with his eyes. And of course it has to be on a Thursday as well, because this particular V.A. where he has to go to it's only on Thursdays.

[00:21:39] So I have to now... My mom, "Oooh." You know.

[00:21:46] So I have to say, But you know Jeanne can take you. Now Jean, her neighbor, is a retired nurse.

[00:21:53] "But who's going to put the medicine on my port?"

[00:21:56] I say, but Jeanne's a nurse. Jeanne can do that. You know I mean.. This is, it's their need, right now. And so you see it.

[00:22:05] And so now this happened last Thursday. Now it's happening again this Thursday. And I didn't know until I got there on Saturday and my father says, Oh, the V.A. called, we have to go this Thursday. I'm like, oh. OK.

[00:22:20] So of course we call Jeanne to take my mom. And now I'm thinking, Oh my gosh I hate to have to keep calling her, even though they say to help.

[00:22:33] Now are you also on Saturday find out my dad has an doctor's appointment on Wednesday. I don't know when that doctor's appointment came from. So you know and I'm two hours away, my husband's two hours away and I have appointments on Wednesday. So what do we do? And my husband is busy on Wednesday. So because we try to plan around everything. But then these doctor appointments pop up. So what do we do?

[00:22:59] So I called my cousin, who offered. But my cousin just lost her mom several months ago. And she's retired and she has offered and she goes and sees my mom and dad probably every other week, but she's two hours away as well. And I hate to bother her, because you know it's hard. I mean she just lost her mom and I'm thinking, okay. She always offers, I'm gonna call her and ask her if she could take my dad on Wednesdays. And you know a surprising thing and a surprising thing that you may find out too she said to me and she started to cry.

[00:23:34] She said, I'll be happy to do it. I told you. You know we're family. She said I'll do anything, you just have to tell me. She goes, You know you guys are all I have left. So it's good for me. It helps me.

[00:23:48] Would I have thought of that? No. You know I'm thinking I'm imposing on her, but here it is, she feels part of the family and that she's really helping and it's helping her. So I'm like, oh great! I'm like OK Deb, you know what, thank you so much. I'm helping you and you're helping me. So you know that's something to think about you know because we don't like to impose on other people but we don't. You know we don't know how it's going to help someone else. You know you could have a neighbor who really is lonely or really needs something to do, and just sits in their house and is happy to help.

[00:24:26] But you know you feel like you're imposing so we probably have to be more vocal and ask you know why not kind of think in our own head, I really don't want to bother that person.

[00:24:37] And you know there's all kinds of volunteers. There's all kinds of organizations. Even your mom and dad's church. You never know where you can get help from. So it's just a suggestion, an idea, and something that I went through and you know I know my cousin offered to help but I just was hesitant to do so. And here in the end I'm helping her.

[00:25:01] So I think the whole idea is you're constantly, especially caring for not only one person but to two... two parents. You have to try to look at things, and I try to look at you know, is there something my mom and dad can do together? Or maybe can your mom go to a senior center and then your dad is home or needs to be home. You know, how do we make the situation easier and doable for everyone?

[00:25:30] And that's yourself included. You know you have to try to figure that out. And that's not going to be set in stone. You're going to constantly be prioritizing and re prioritizing you know to see what you can do, because their needs and their situation is going to change.

[00:25:47] And it could change from day to day. And you're going to have things pop up, like my dad... Oh, I got an appointment on Wednesday and on Thursday.

[00:25:55] And then you're going to have you know your mom she wants just one person to help her out.

[00:26:03] So I have to tell you about... Yes, I walked into a home the other day and the client who I've been with she's been in her 90s. You know she's a little forgetful but nothing, you know nothing drastic. Nothing but her baseline is off where I you know... But this time yes.

[00:26:19] I walked in and I'm like, Rose how are you? And I see her, she has lipstick and she's polishing her nails with it. And I'm saying, Rose, what are you doing?

[00:26:26] She says, I'm polishing my nails.

[00:26:31] And I'm like, oh... OK.

[00:26:33] So you know, I know something's wrong. Something's off there. So and I'm talking to her and I could tell that, you know, this isn't Rose that I normally see. And I see her probably every other week.

[00:26:48] So of course I called her daughter and said, We have to make a doctor's appointment, we have to get your mom to the doctor. And what did it wind up to be? A urinary tract infection. So those things can sneak up on you.

[00:27:01] So I just wanted to let you know, if you're caring for more than one person, there's bound to be less time for each of them. So don't try to you know create perfection, because you're not going to be able to do that. You just have to know you're doing your best. And good is good enough.

[00:27:24] So this was episode 109. Thank you so much for listening.

[00:27:28] Parents Are Hard To Raise® family, I'd love getting your e-mails and questions so please keep sending them. You can reach me at Diane at Parents Are Hard To Raise® dot org or just click the green button on our home page.

[00:27:39] Parents Are Hard To Raise® is a CounterThink media production. The music used in this broadcast was managed by Cosmo Music, New York, New York. Our New York producer is Joshua Green. Our broadcast engineer is Well Gambino. And from our

London studios, the melodic voice of our announcer, Miss Dally D. We love our parents but parents sure are hard to raise. Thank you so much for listening. Till next time may you forget everything you don't want to remember and remember everything you don't want to forget.

[00:28:10] See you again next week.